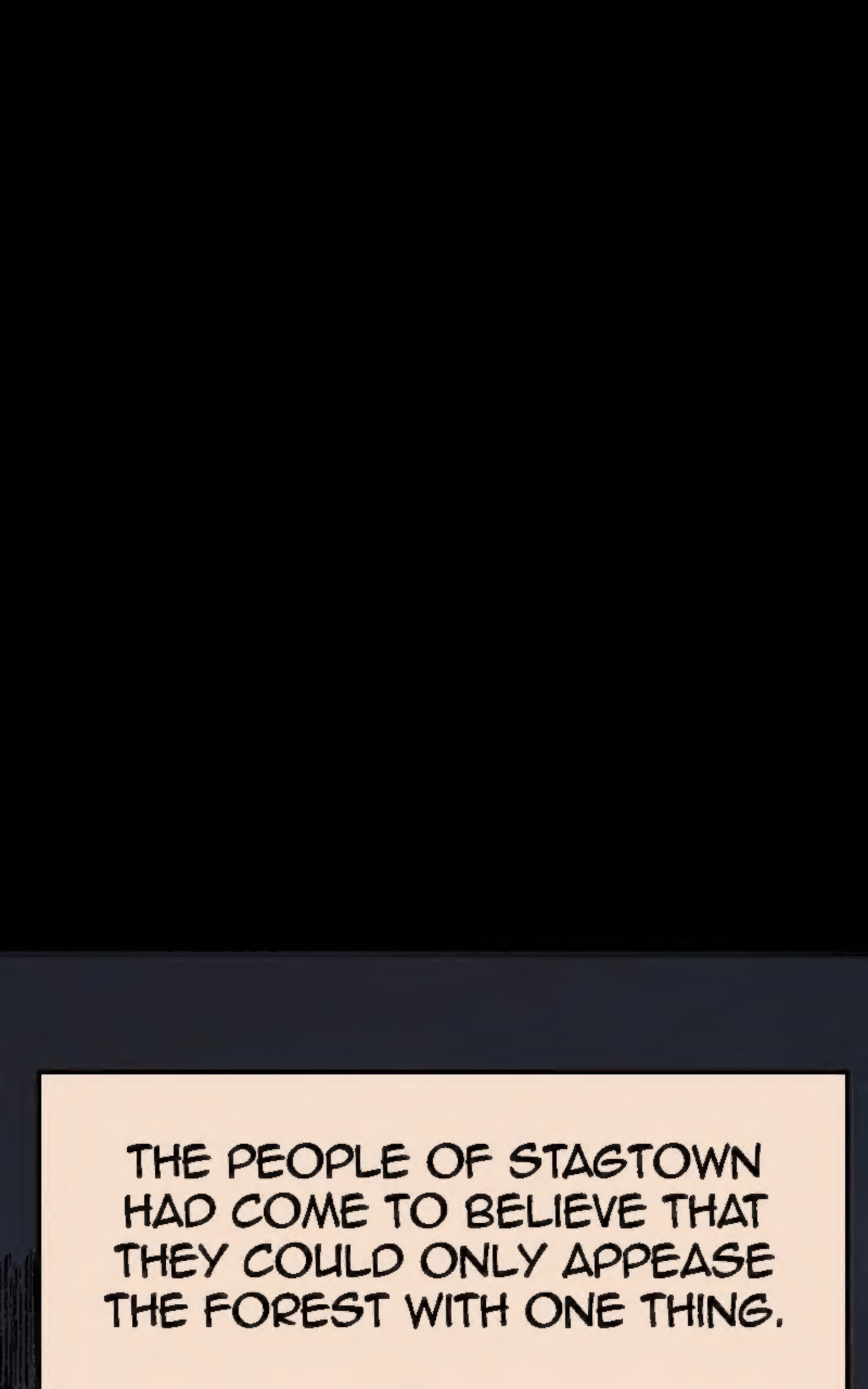
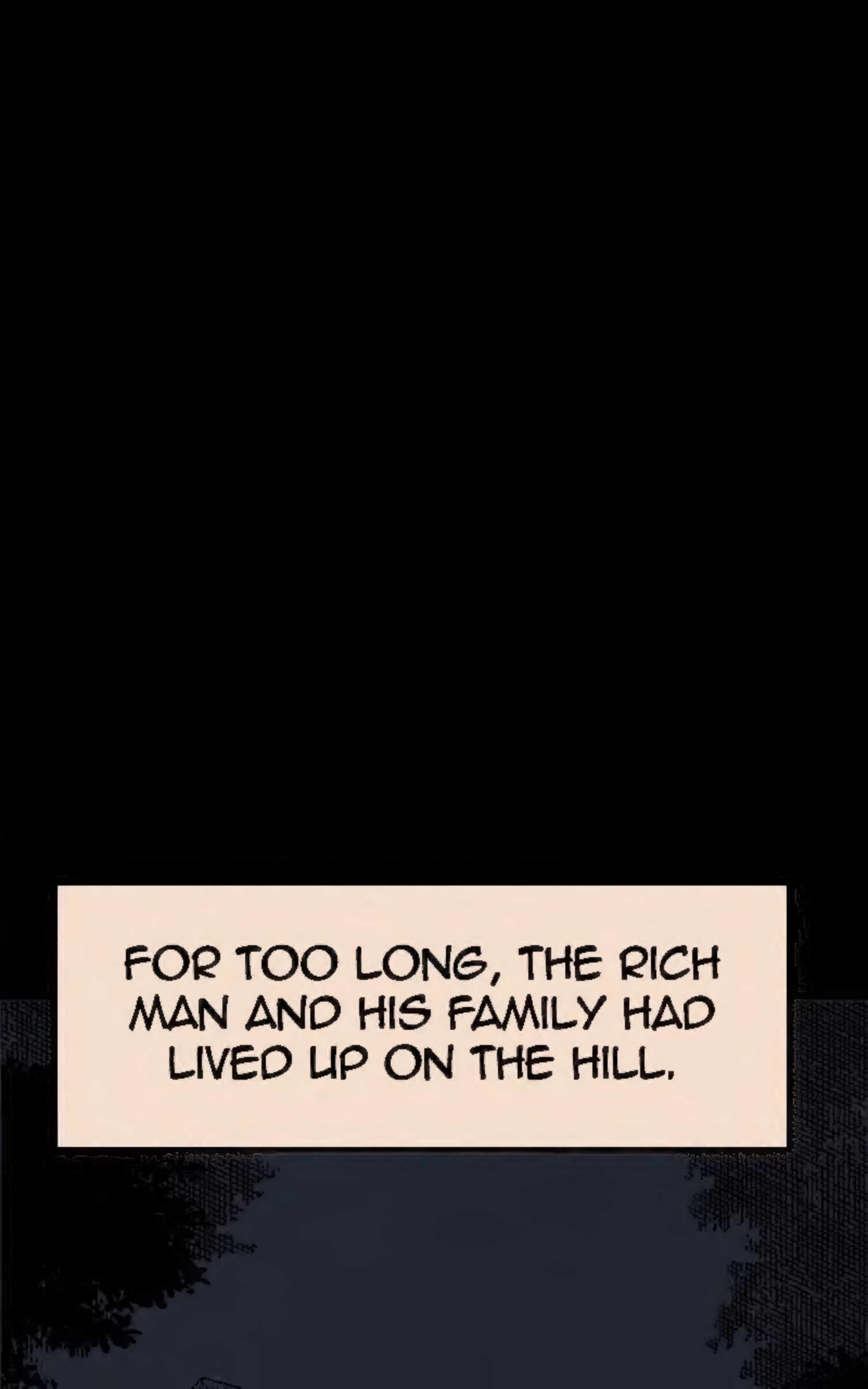

THE PEOPLE OF STAGTOWN HAD COME TO BELIEVE THAT THEY COULD ONLY APPEASE THE FOREST WITH ONE THING.

A SACRIFICE.

remember u.


FOR TOO LONG, THE RICH MAN AND HIS FAMILY HAD LIVED UP ON THE HILL.

INSULATED FROM THE HUNGER AND DROUGHT IN THE TOWN BELOW.

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ALL THEIR FAULT.

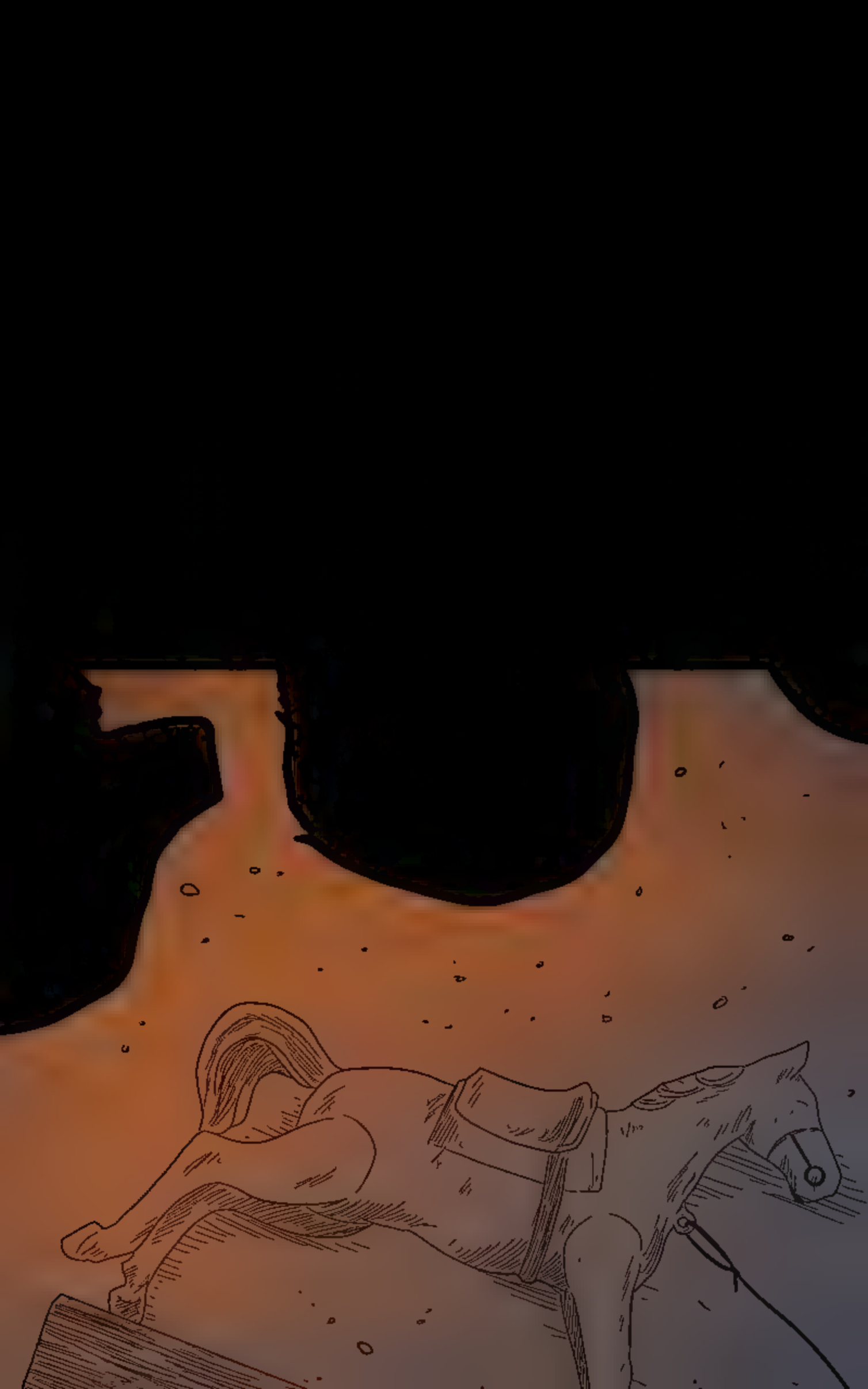
ONE DARK NIGHT, THE PEOPLE MADE THEIR WAY UP TO THE HOUSE.

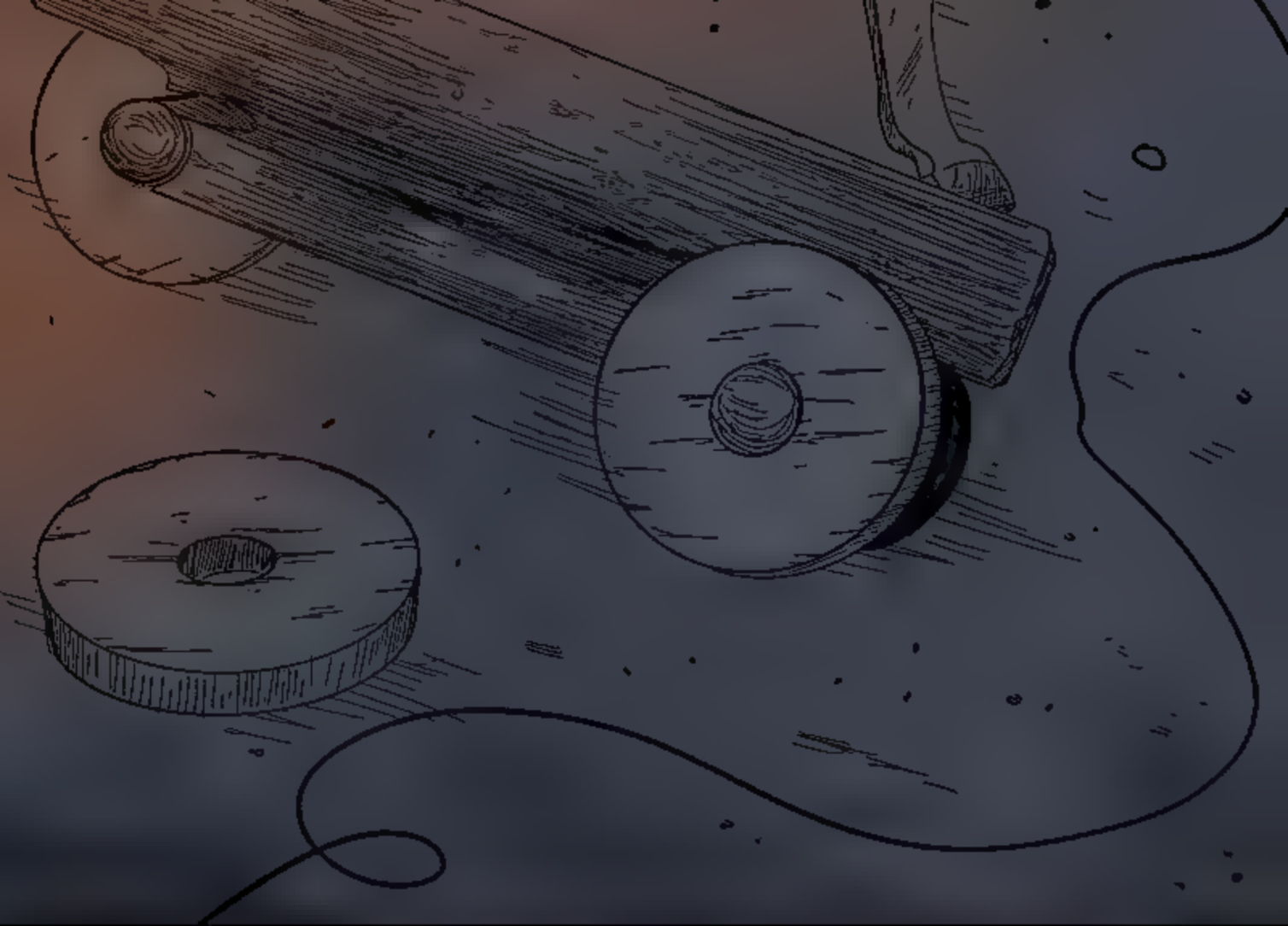
THE DOOR WAS
KNOCKED DOWN.

THE FAMILY WAS DRAGGED OUT.

NO ONE IN THE
HOUSE WAS SPARED...

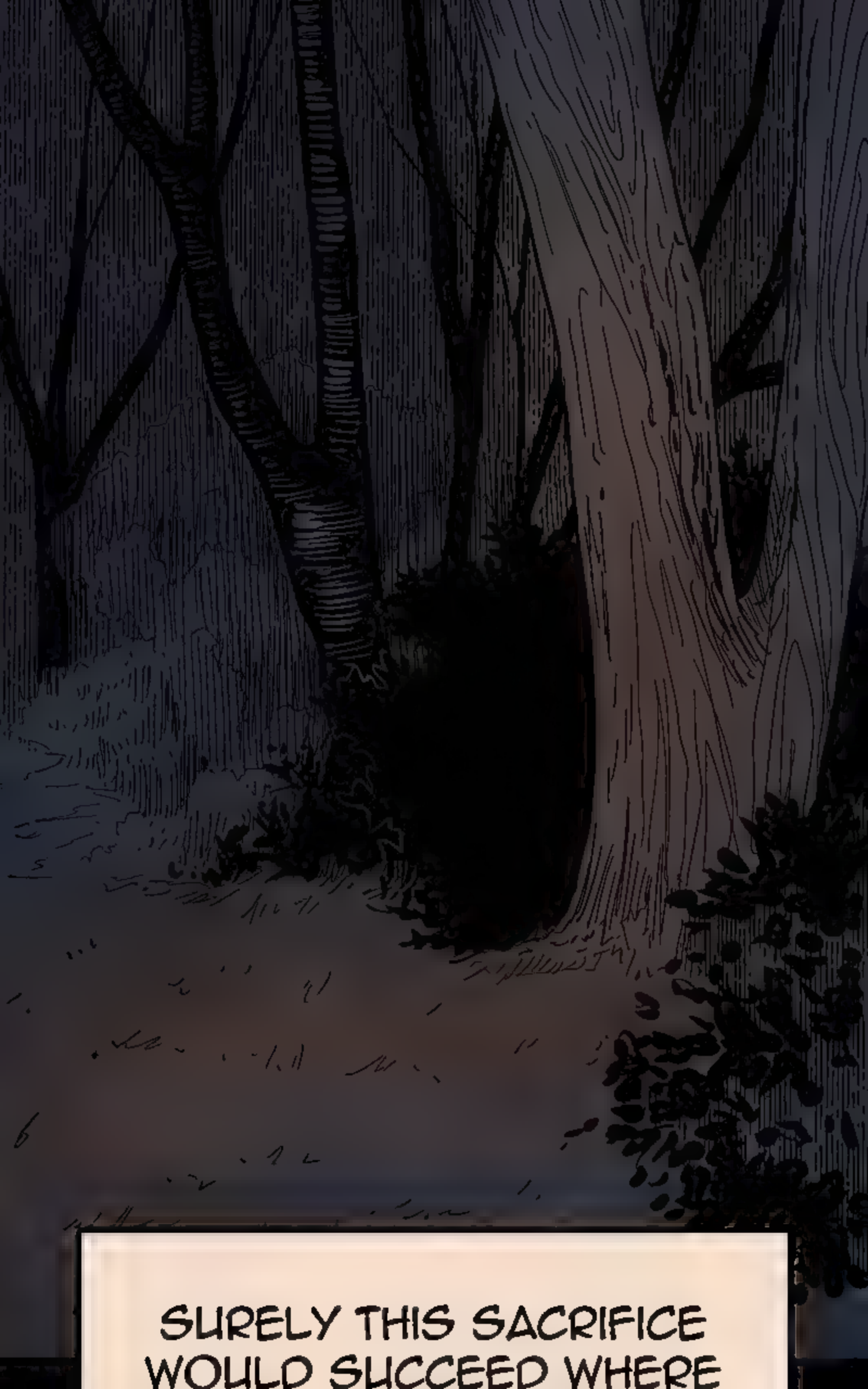
...FROM THE ANGER
OF THE MOB.





IT WAS A SCENE BETTER LEFT UNDESCRIBED.

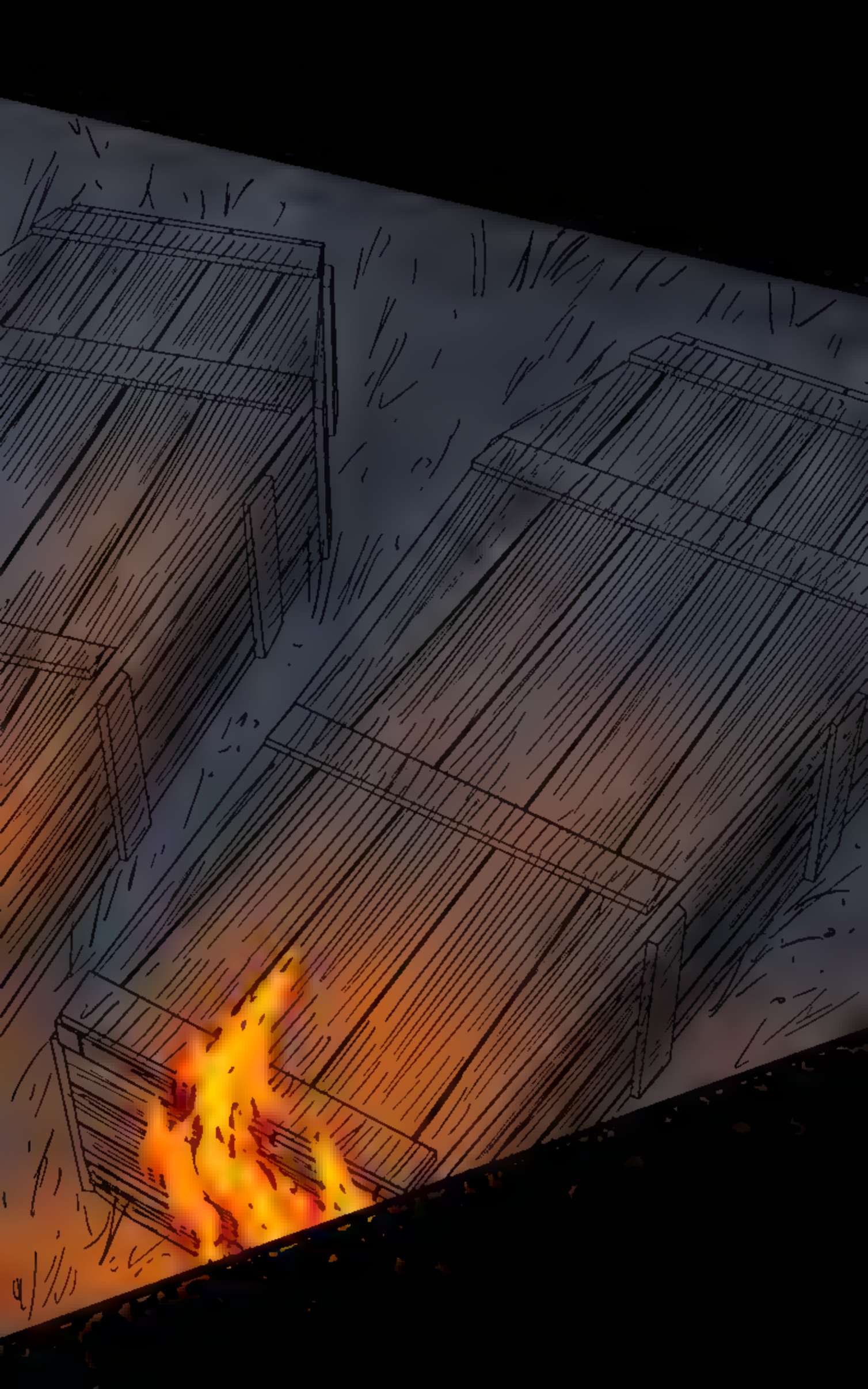
THEY CRATED UP THE BODIES OF THE FAMILY AND TOOK THEM TO THE EDGE OF THE FOREST.

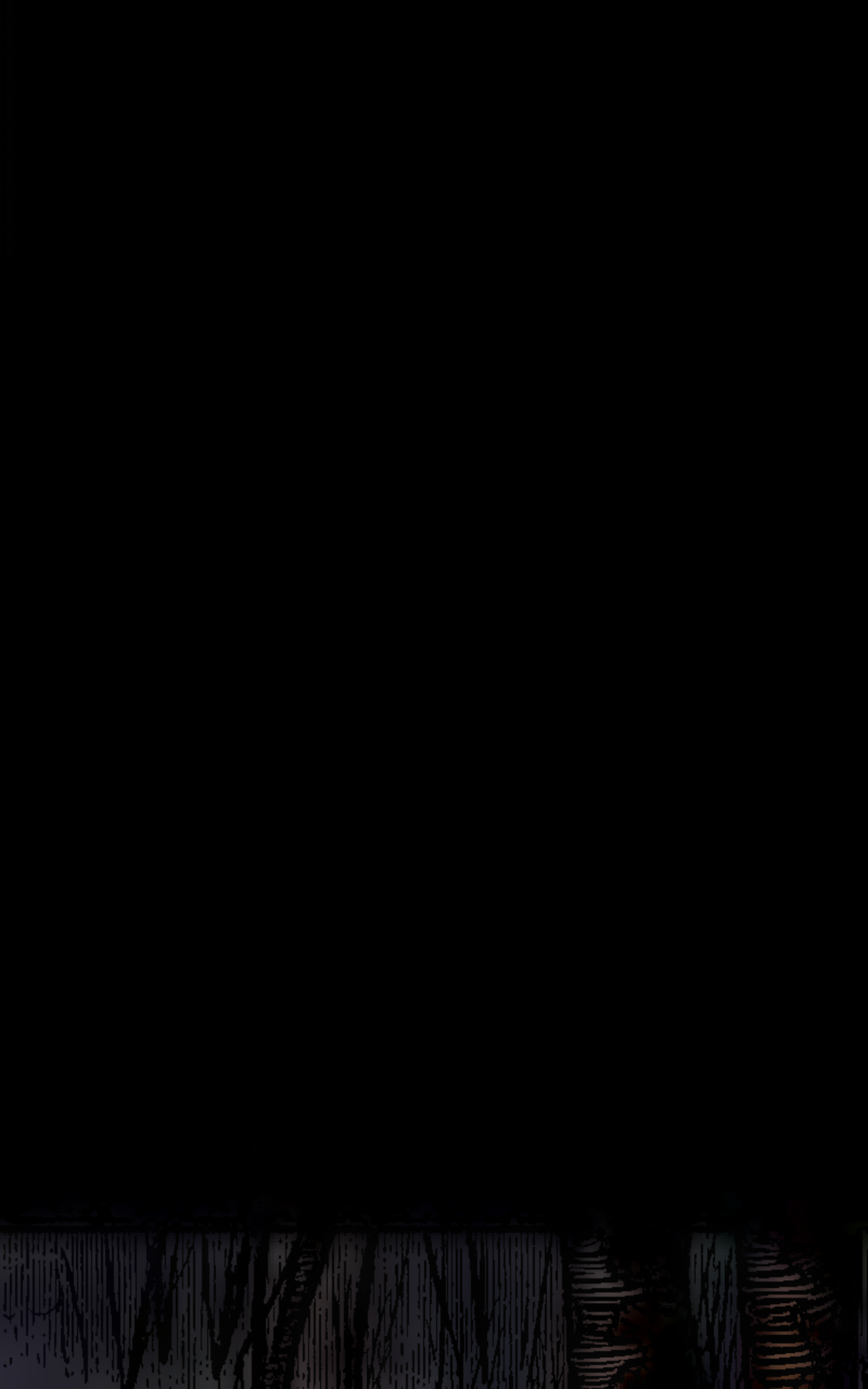

SURELY THIS SACRIFICE
WOULD SUCCEED WHERE

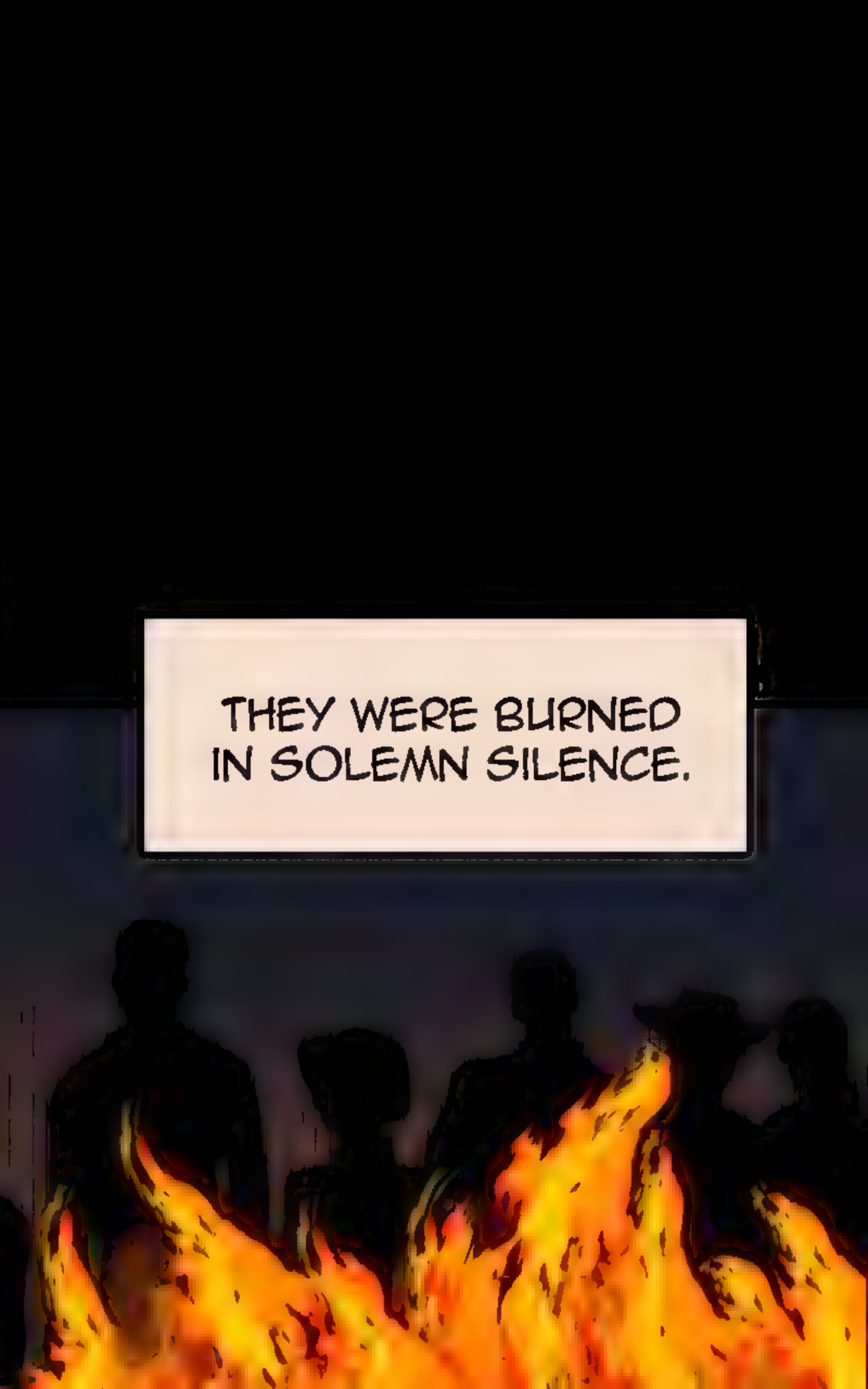
SMALLER ONES HAD NOT.

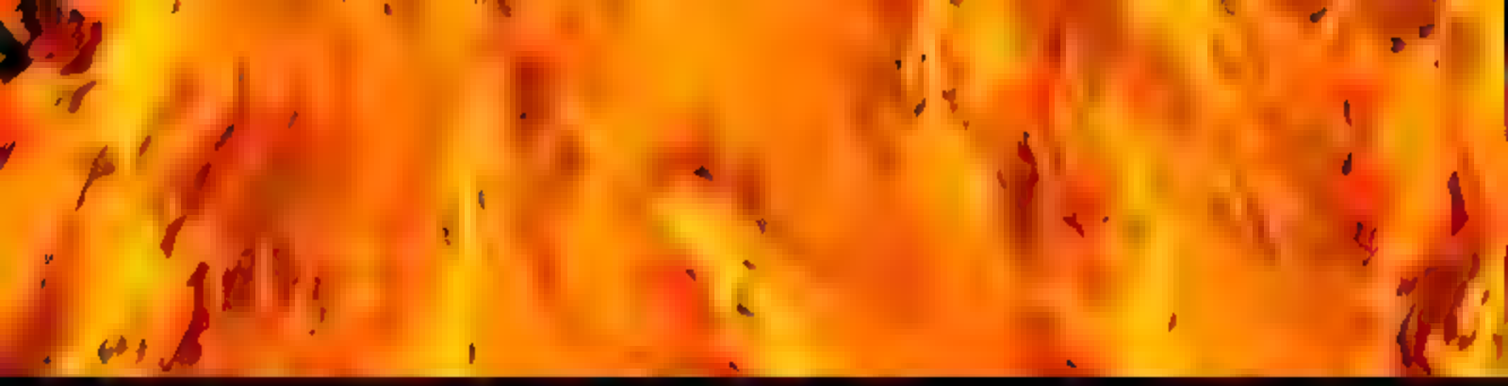
THE FAMILY WAS OFFERED AS A GIFT TO THE SOUL OF THE FOREST.

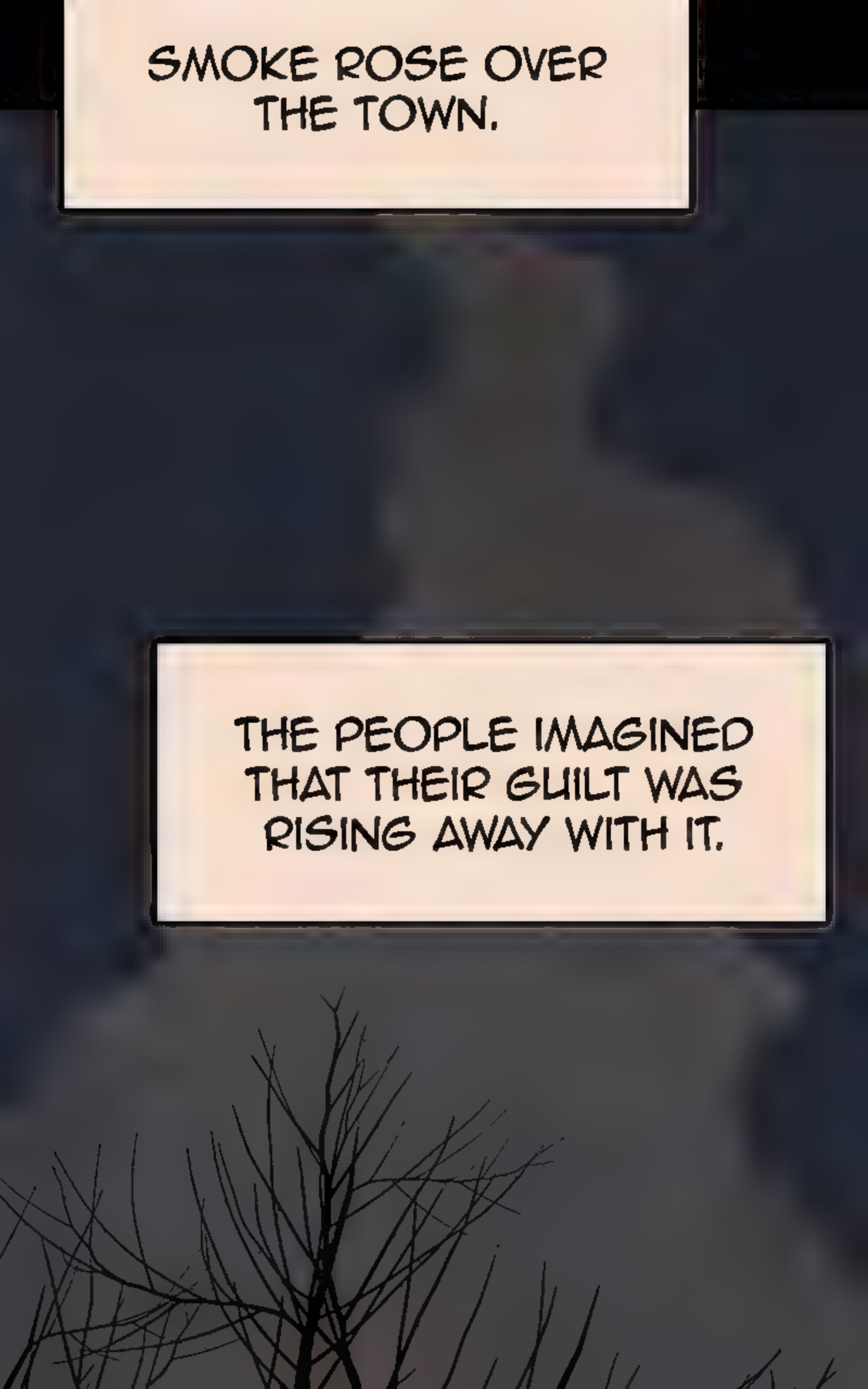
A PEACE OFFERING, TO PUNISH THE GUILTY AND END THE SUFFERING OF THE TOWN.



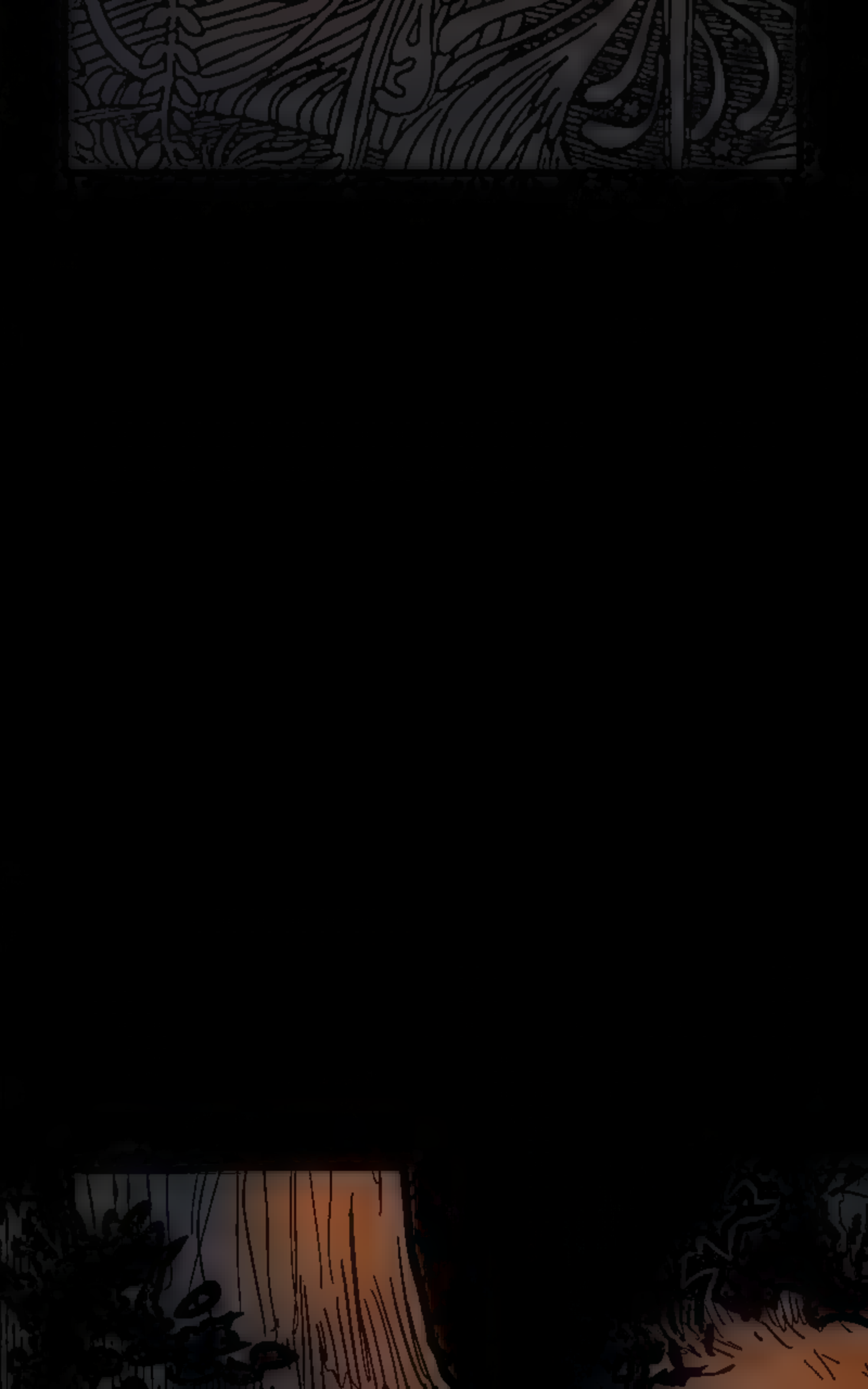



THEY WERE BURNED
IN SOLEMN SILENCE.




SMOKE ROSE OVER THE TOWN.
THE PEOPLE IMAGINED THAT THEIR GUILT WAS RISING AWAY WITH IT.

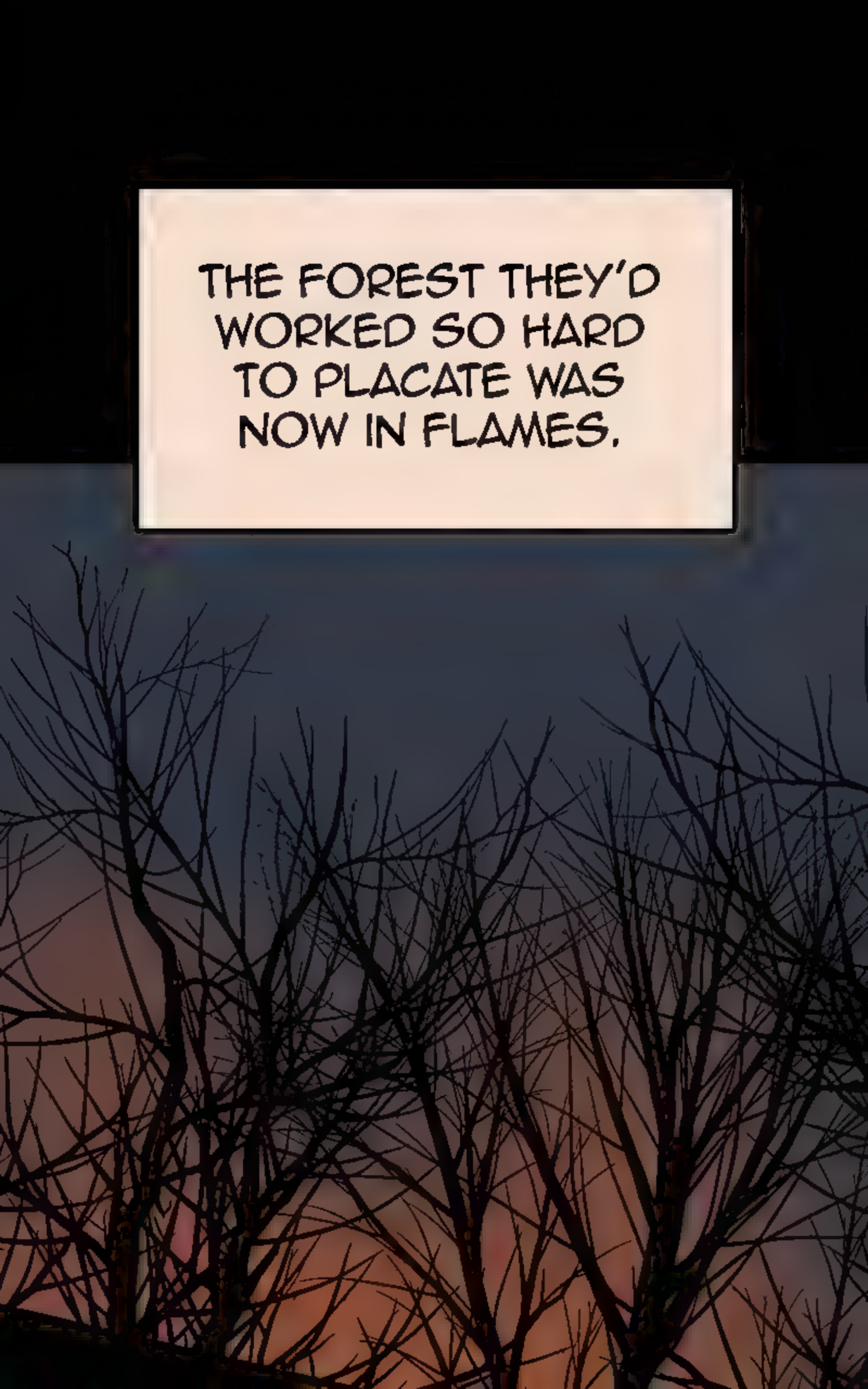
BUT THE FOREST,
IT SEEMED, WOULD
NOT BE SATISFIED
SO EASILY.



AND ONE SINGLE SPARK WAS ALL IT TOOK.

A TREE CAUGHT FIRE.

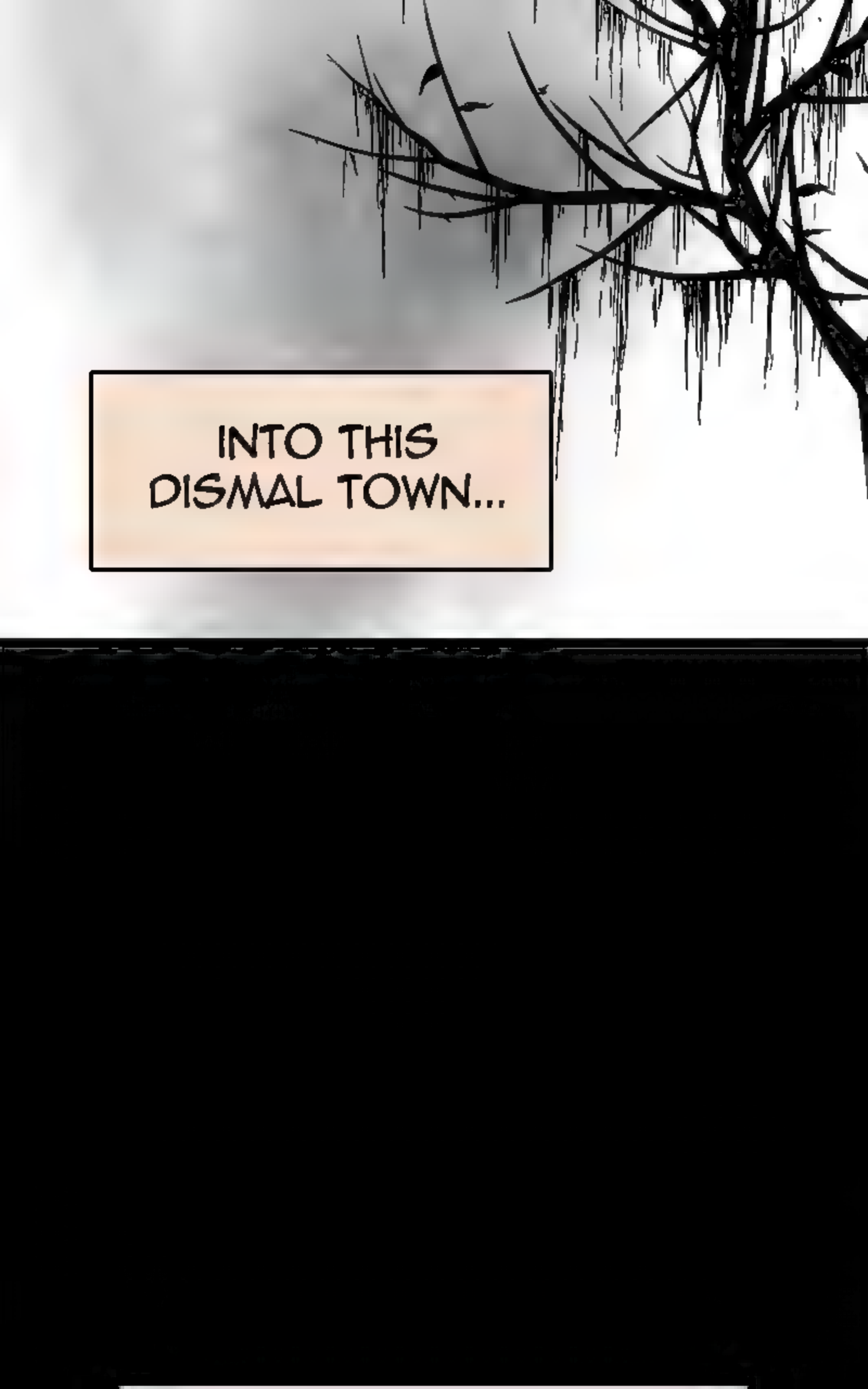
THEN ANOTHER.


THE FOREST THEY'D WORKED SO HARD TO PLACATE WAS NOW IN FLAMES.

AND WHEN THE FIRE FINALLY DIED OUT...

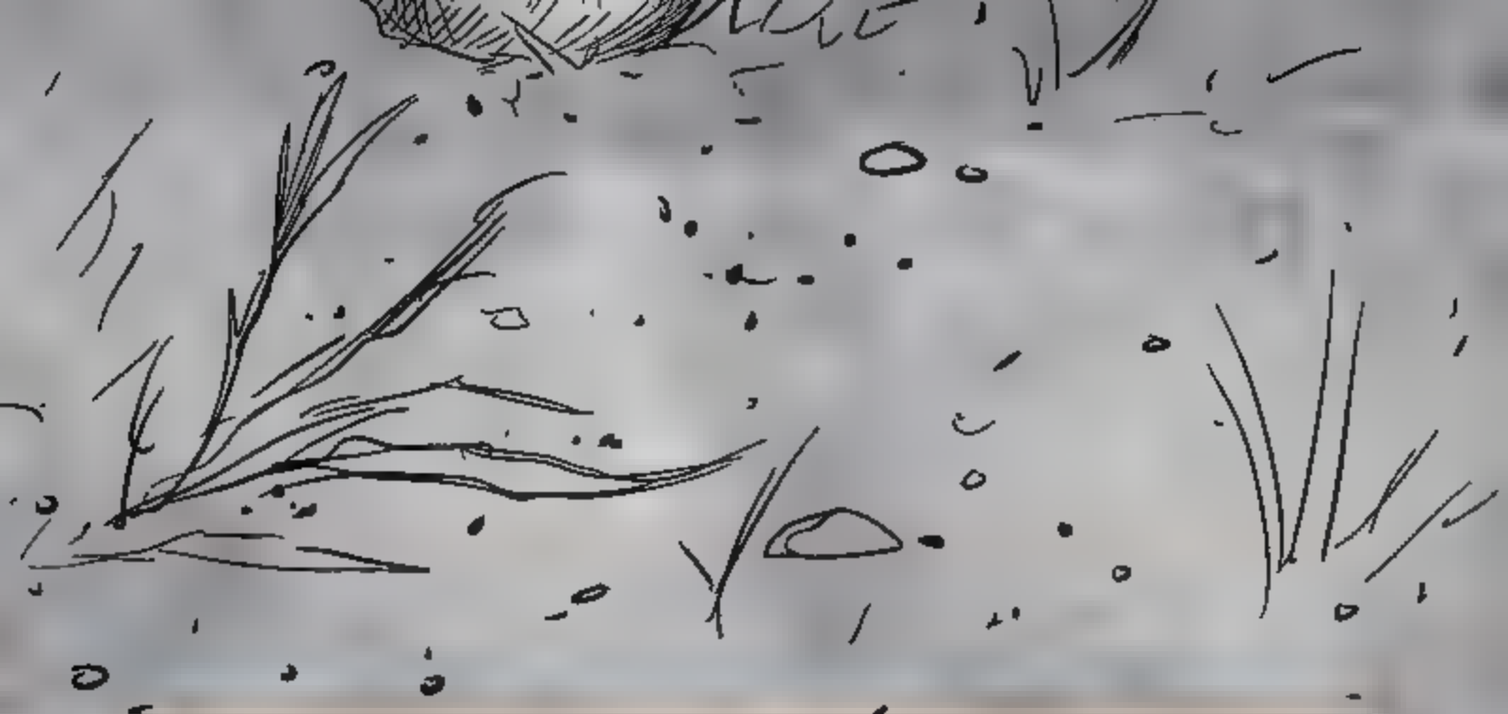
...THERE WAS ONLY
RUIN LEFT BEHIND.

MANY MONTHS PASSED.


INTO THIS
DISMAL TOWN...

A STRANGER CAME.

ONE OF THOSE UNFORTUNATE MEN, OF WHICH EVERYONE HAD HEARD IN PASSING.



ONE WHO HAD BARTERED HIS SOUL AWAY FOR THE SAKE OF A MEAL.

ONE WHO WOULD, FOR SOME SMALL AMOUNT, CONSUME THE CRIMES OF THE DEAD AND LET THEM ASCEND TO HEAVEN, WHILE HE SANK LOWER TO HELL.

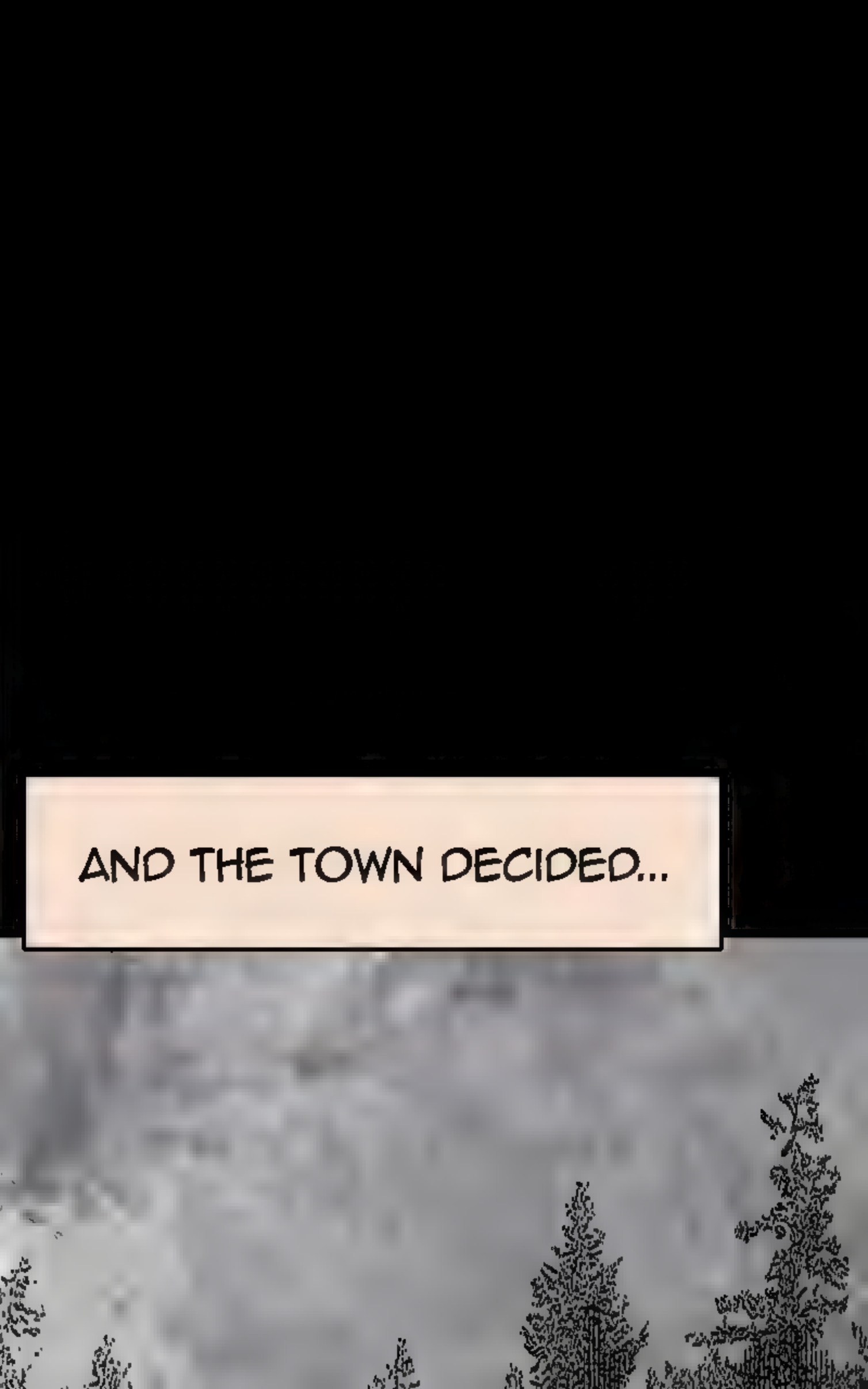
A SIN-EATER.

LOOKING FOR WORK.

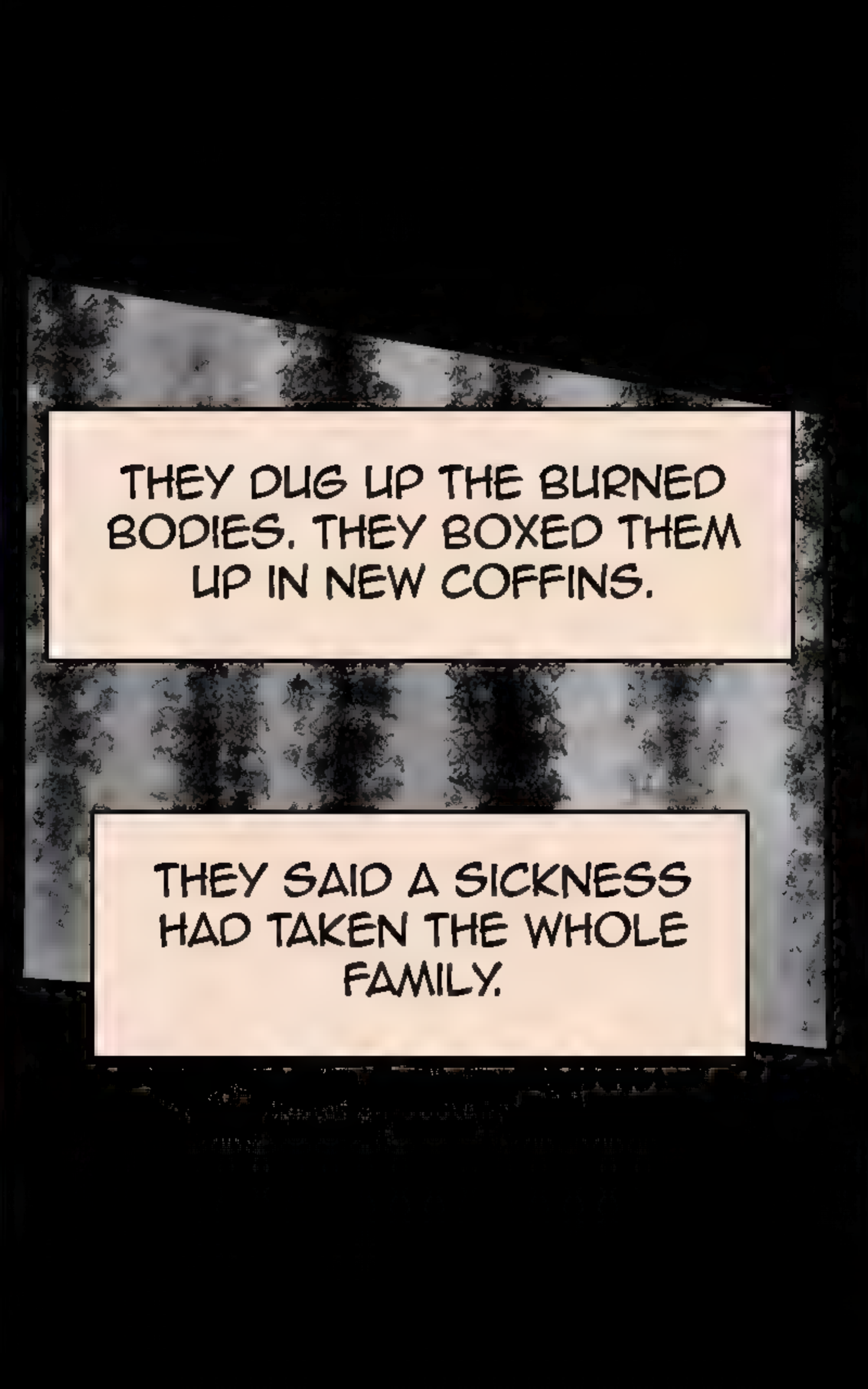
LOOKING FOR RECENTLY DEAD, WHOSE FAMILIES SOUGHT ABSOLUTION.

HE WAS A BLASPHEMY.

A WALKING PLAGUE, CARRYING THE SINS OF HUNDREDS, MAYBE THOUSANDS.


AND THE TOWN DECIDED...

...THAT THEY COULD USE HIM.

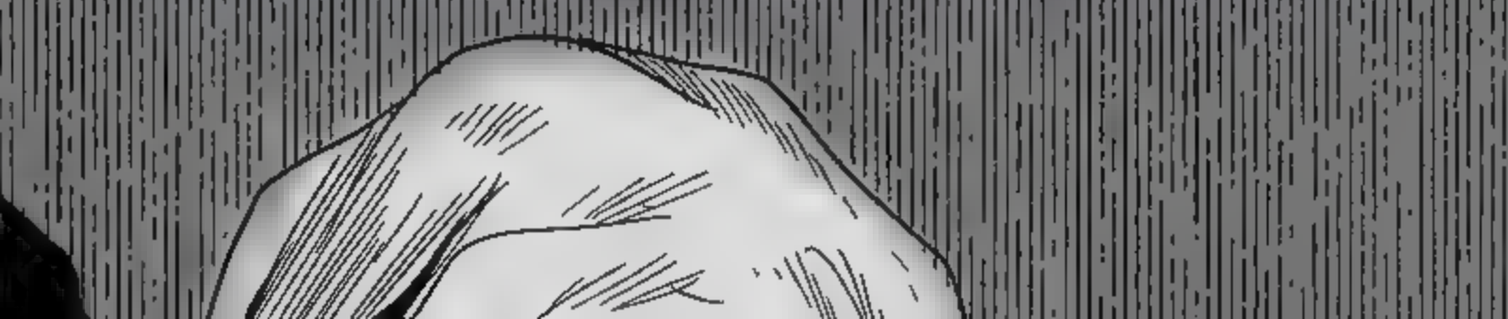

THEY DUG UP THE BURNED BODIES. THEY BOXED THEM UP IN NEW COFFINS.
THEY SAID A SICKNESS HAD TAKEN THE WHOLE FAMILY.

THEY OFFERED THE STANDARD PAY FOR HIS SERVICES.

A BOWL OF DRINK, SOME COINS...AND A SMALL LOAF OF BREAD, TO EAT OVER THE BODIES.

A SYMBOL OF EATING THEIR SINS.

THE SIN-EATER, HOWEVER, WAS NOT FOOLED.



THE STENCH OF MONTHS-OLD DECAY WAS ALL AROUND. THIS FAMILY DID NOT DIE RECENTLY.

AN AIR OF GUILT WAS AT

HIS BACK, COMING OFF THE CROWD OF TOWNSPEOPLE LIKE HEAT FROM A FURNACE.

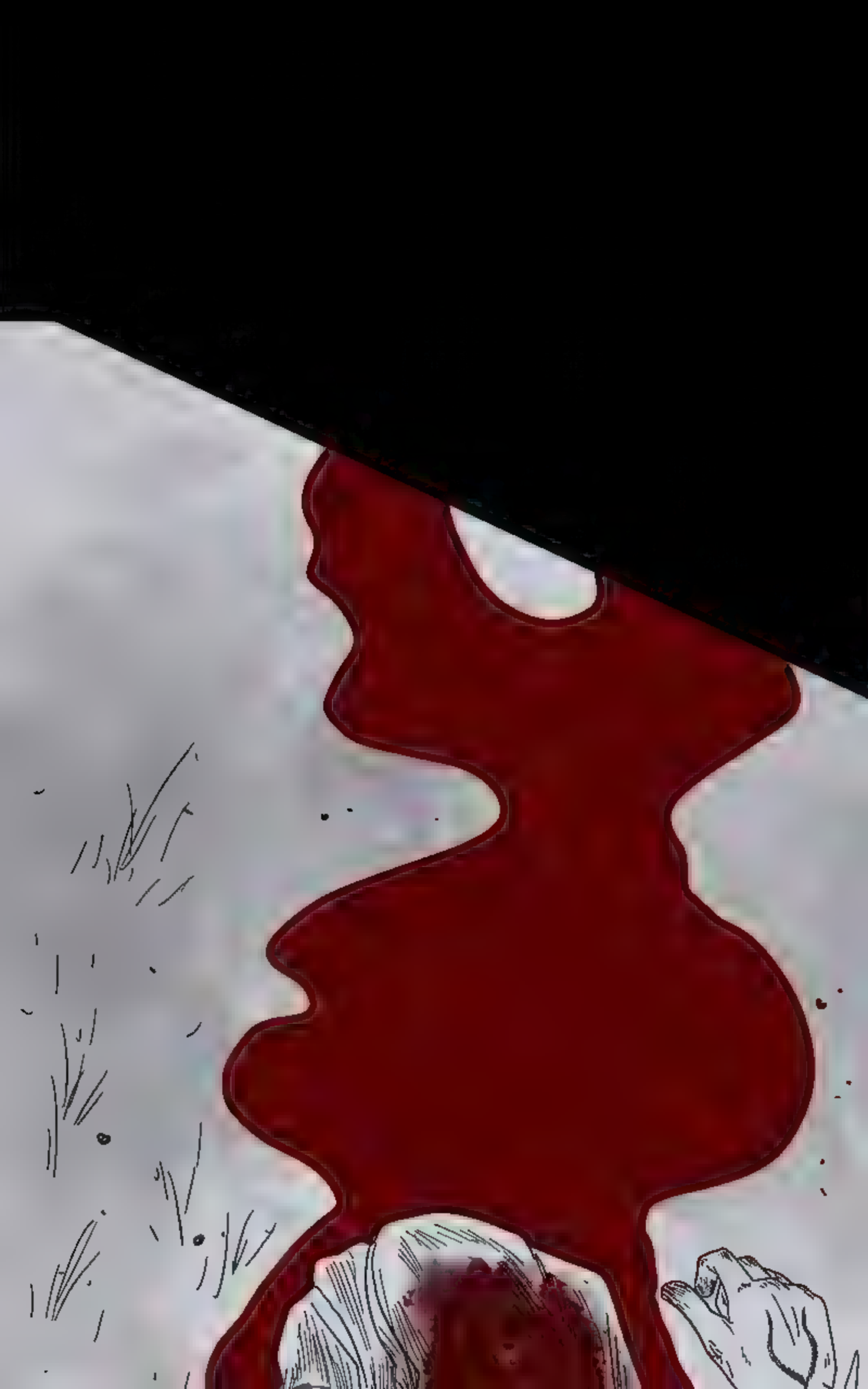
HE REFUSED TO HELP.

IT WAS THE WRONG ANSWER.

THE PEOPLE WERE NOT ABOUT TO BE DENIED SALVATION.

WHEN WORDS AND MONEY COULD NOT PERSUADE...

...THEY CHOSE MORE VIOLENCE.



IN THE END...

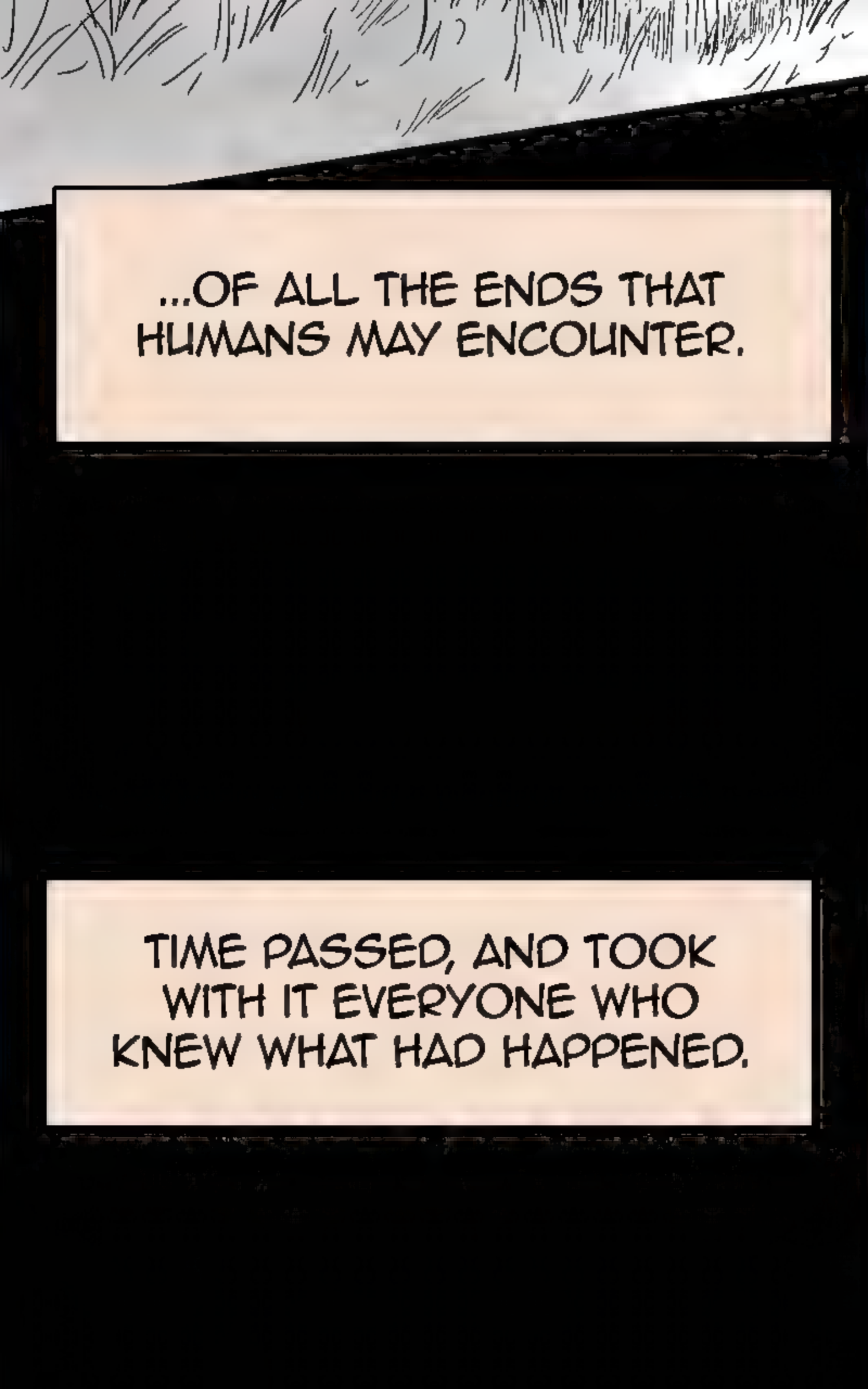
THEIR ANGER LED ONLY

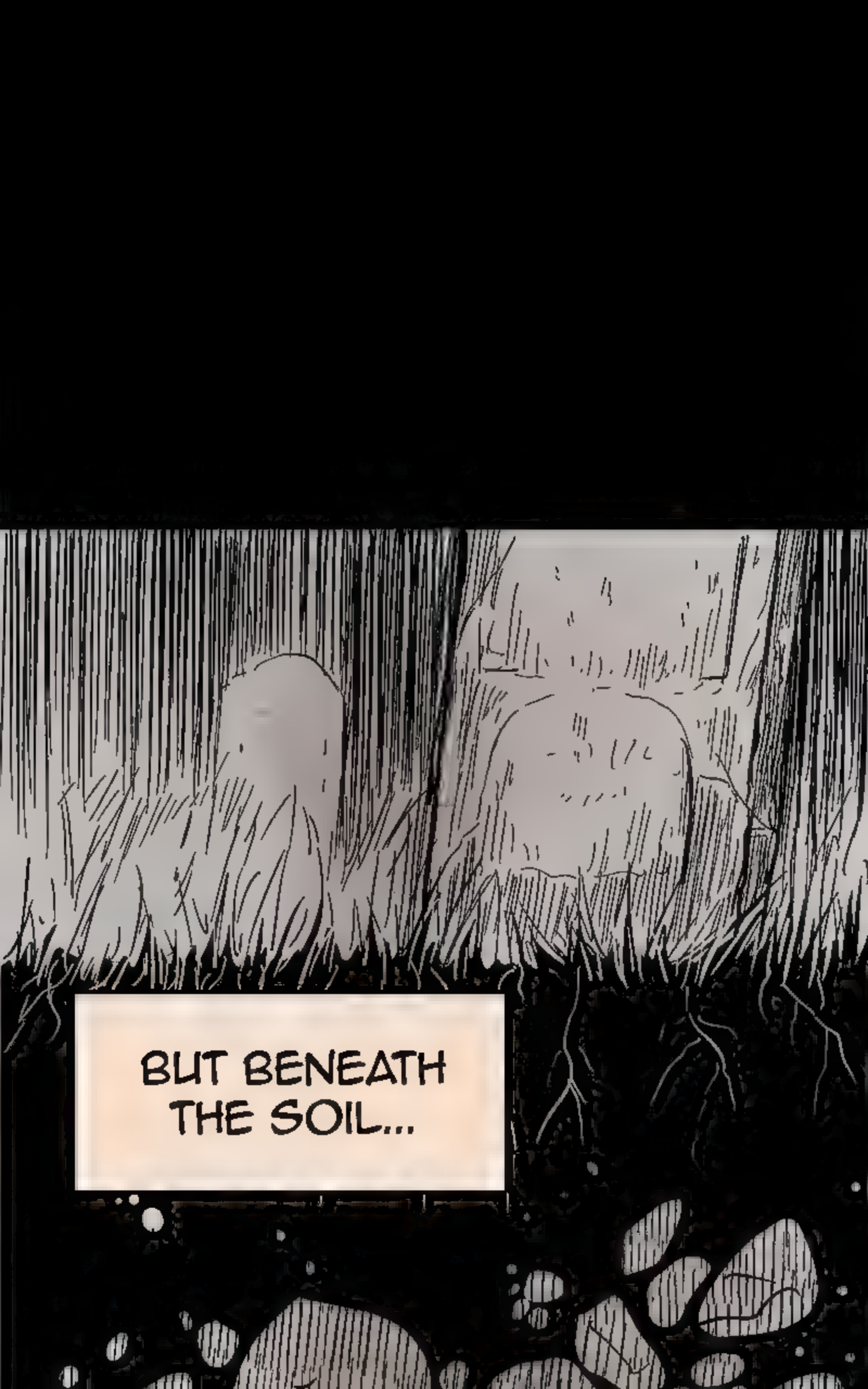
TO MORE GUILT.

THERE WAS NO END IN SIGHT TO THEIR MISERY.

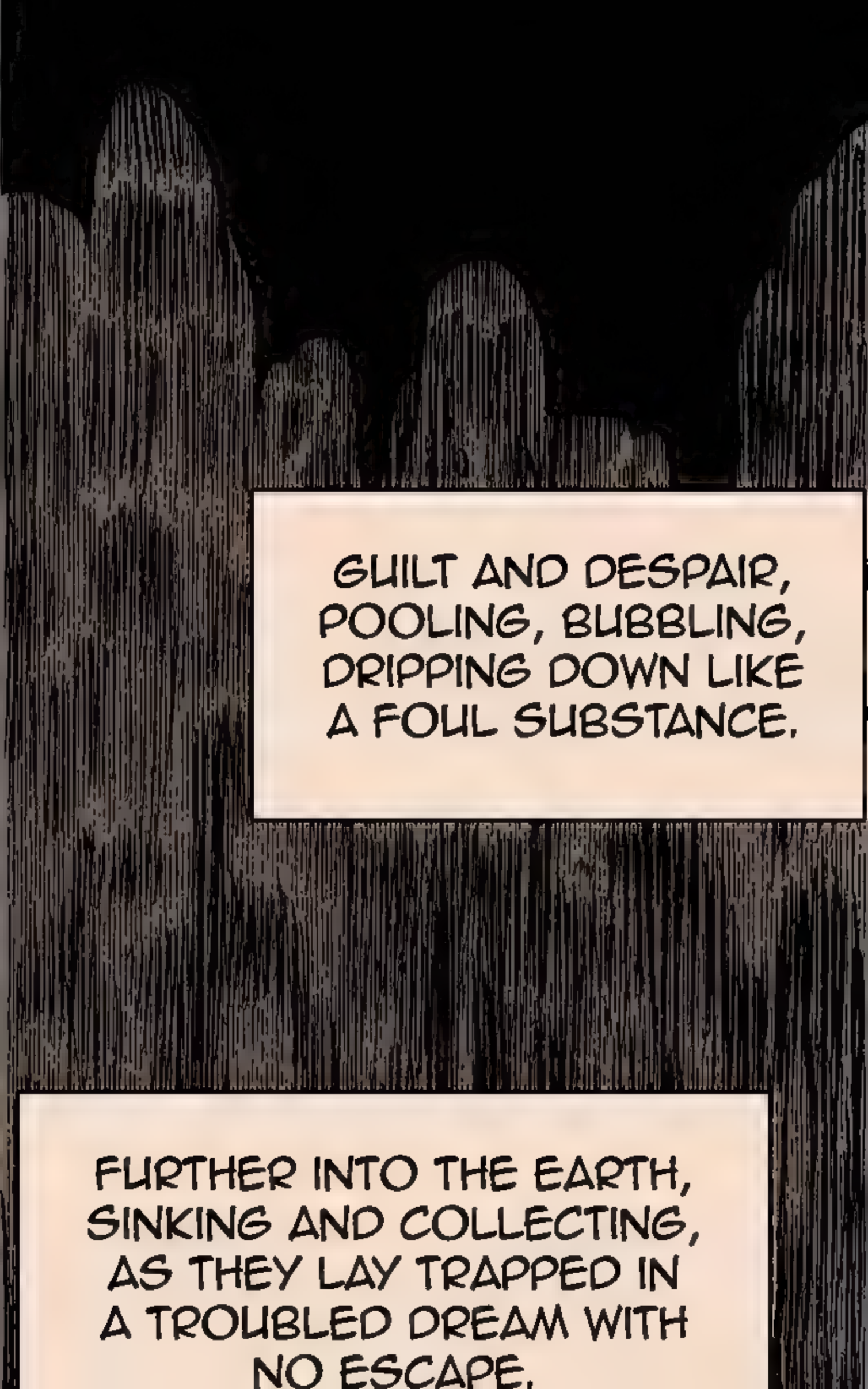
NO MORE CHANCES.

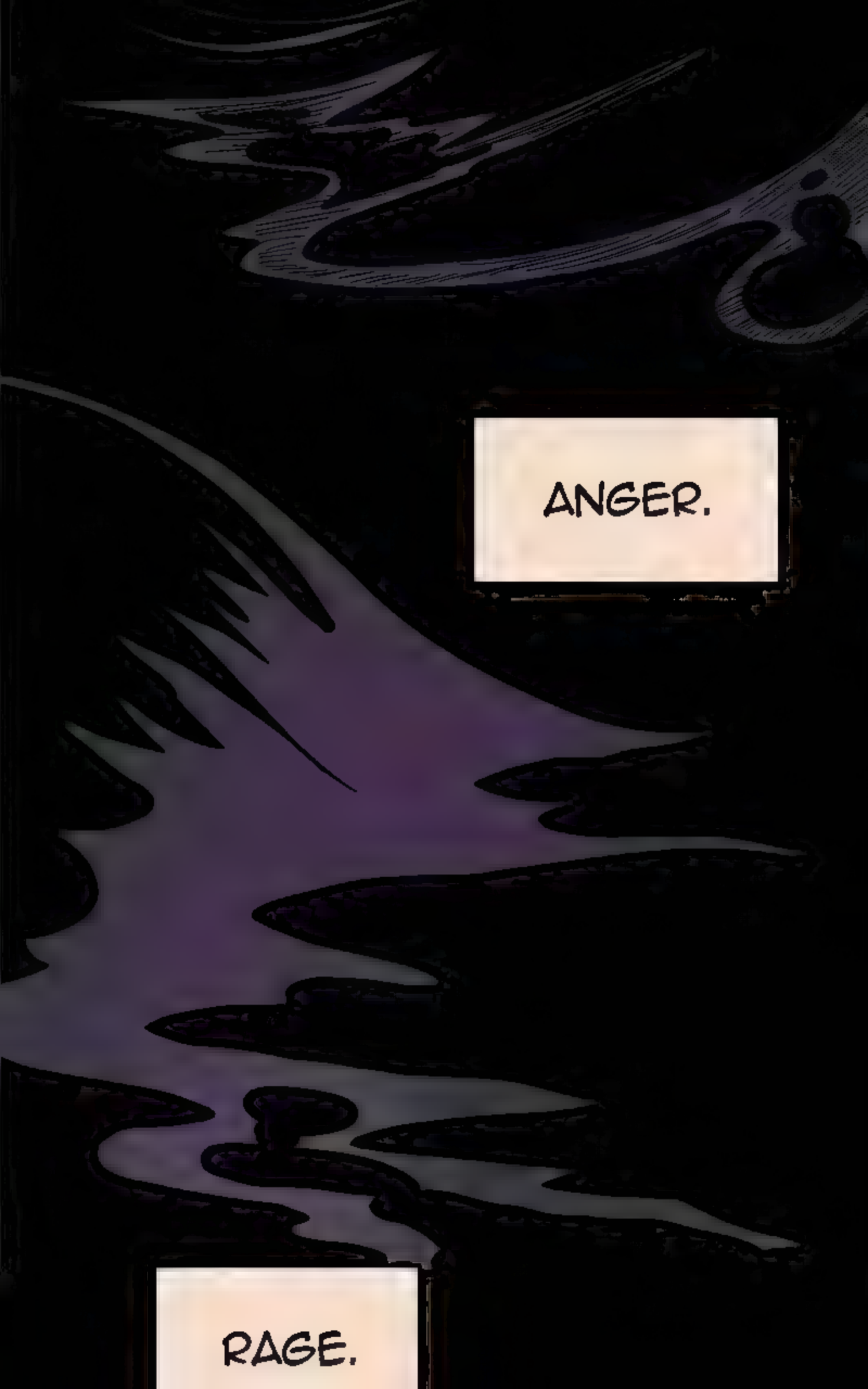
IN TIME, THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN SLOWLY DIED. OF SICKNESS, OF OLD AGE...


...OF ALL THE ENDS THAT HUMANS MAY ENCOUNTER.
TIME PASSED, AND TOOK WITH IT EVERYONE WHO KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED.


BUT BENEATH
THE SOIL...

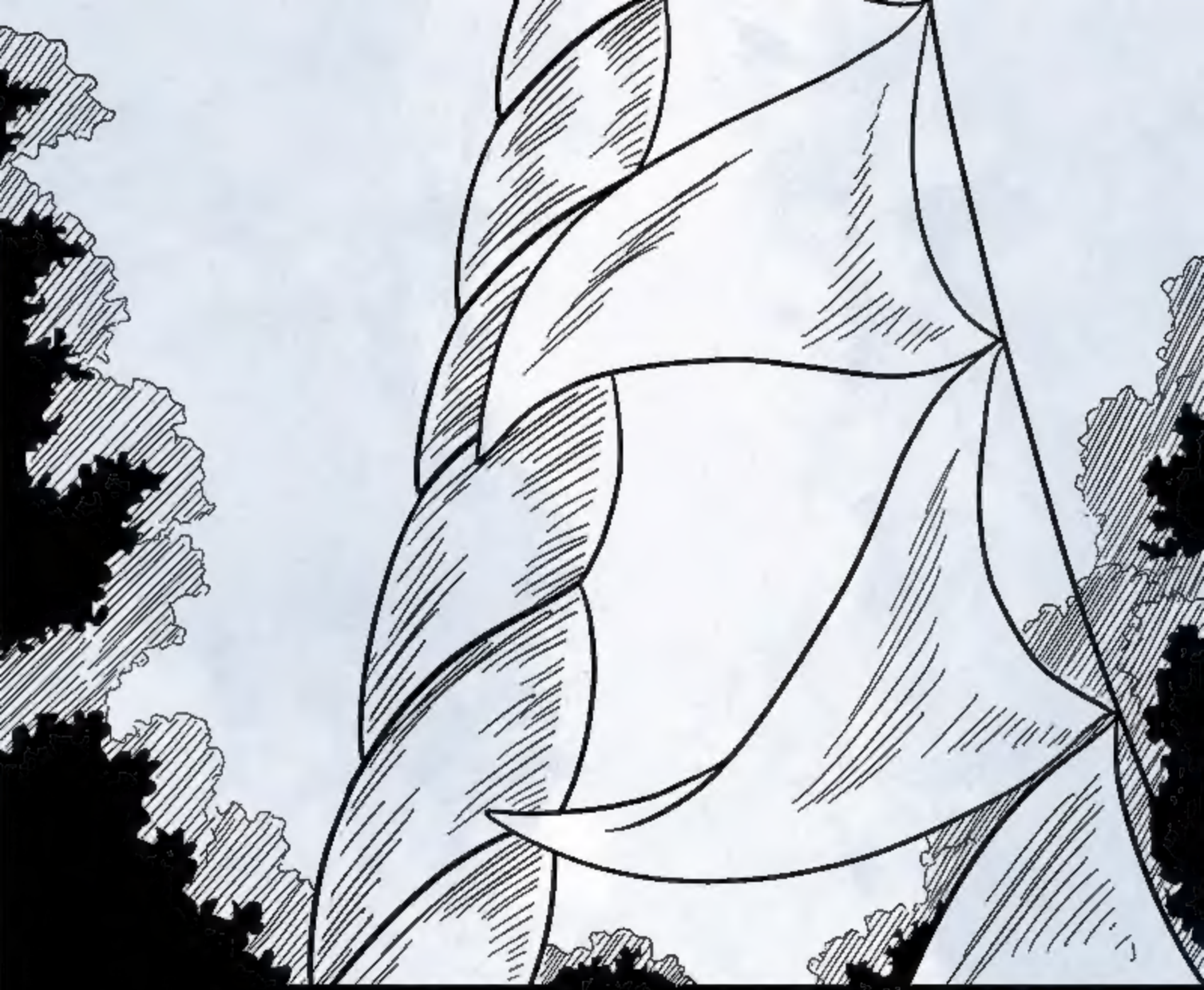
DEEP DOWN...
THEIR SOULS STILL RAGED AND WEPT.


GUILT AND DESPAIR, POOLING, BUBBLING, DRIPPING DOWN LIKE A FOUL SUBSTANCE.
FURTHER INTO THE EARTH, SINKING AND COLLECTING, AS THEY LAY TRAPPED IN A TROUBLED DREAM WITH NO ESCAPE.


ANGER.
RAGE.

A DESPERATE NEED TO BE GIVEN ONE MORE CHANCE.

ONE DAY, MANY YEARS LATER...



A NEW CAROUSEL WAS BUILT.